

## **Santiago Declaration**

*Draft declaration to be shared with the participants at the side event organised by the Hernán Santa Cruz Library and IFLA in the context of the Second Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development 2018. With the goal of initiating a consultation process in Latin America and the Caribbean in preparation for the High Level Political Forum 2019.*

### **Recognising that:**

- access to information is a universal human right and an essential tool for achieving sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- public access to information enables people to take conscious decisions that can improve their lives,
- communities that have access to relevant and timely information can be better placed to eradicate poverty and inequality, to improve agriculture, provide quality education, and promote health, culture, research and innovation;
- communities need spaces which support life-long learning, in particular for people with low levels of literacy;

### **Acknowledging that:**

- libraries around the world offer the physical and virtual infrastructure to guarantee trusted and tailored access to information to citizens, reducing the digital divide through inclusive and innovative information services.
- there are more than a billion registered library users in the World, and for many of them, libraries represent a unique space enabling access to the Internet, social networks and e-Government services;
- libraries are perfectly suited places to empower people through media and information literacy as a pre-requisite for equitable and critical access to information and knowledge, allowing for full engagement in democratic and civic life;
- there is already a clear position by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) concerning the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, which engages and mobilises libraries to work in support of the SDGs.

### **We therefore commit to:**

- reaffirm the importance of libraries as strategic allies in the fulfilment of the SDGs, with a particular focus on access to information for all citizens;

- draw attention to governments of the need to develop strategies and mechanisms, at the national and local levels, which will facilitate and reinforce the work of libraries in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- encourage governments to enter into agreements and pass laws on copyright which facilitate access to information without economic barriers for all citizens;
- support the development and provision of the resources necessary for the involvement of libraries in Latin America and the Caribbean in national and regional projects which aim to implement one or more of the SDGs;
- support the work of national and regional associations of libraries and librarians in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- facilitate collaboration between libraries in Latin America and the Caribbean at the national and regional level for the exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices;
- facilitate discussion around library policies for access to information as part of a universal approach to human rights, as well as the right to knowledge.
- call on the Member States of the United Nations, in the context of discussions on SDG 16 at the 2019 High Level Political Forum, to include discussion on SDG 16.10 and the relevance of access to information for all of the 2030 Agenda.

**To submit comments or ask for more information:**

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